



Church of the Advent

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Dear Friends,

I am writing to share with you that I have accepted an offer to be the next priest-in-charge at the parish of St. John's in Vernon, Connecticut. It has been a privilege to be your rector for the past ten years. This church will always have a special place in my heart. When I arrived here, I was the youngest rector in the diocese, carting along toddler Maggie with Thomas not yet born. You greeted Gretchen and me warmly, and together we have made this parish a peaceful house of prayer.

Together, we took on many building projects. Together, we have had auctions, mission trips, bible studies, and Confirmation and Sunday School classes. We have reached out to the community and provided much needed services for meetings dealing with addiction, Zoom school for those in hybrid learning, and commissary space for local businesses. We truly use our space for the public good.

Together, we have had reverent and hopeful worship with simple but deep prayer and music. We have provided leadership within the deanery and fostered relationships with nearby churches working on combined Holy Week liturgies, Sacred Ground Classes, Vacation Bible Schools, hunger ministries, and area cleanup days.

We have accomplished much together. The Church of the Advent is a very capable and faithful parish, and I know you will continue to do well. As Julian of Norwich wrote, "all shall be well, all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well." God is faithful and will continue to love and care for this dynamic church. As for me and my family, it is time to move on. I am heading back to an old mill town like the ones in which I was raised. We will be close to our older family members, whose health concerns have made living near them an increasingly important priority.

Our diocese has been well served by Canon Carol Gallagher, our regional canon, who handles transitions like this one. We will also have a congregational consultant to work with the Advent. We have capable wardens and a faithful vestry who will help lead this church through this transition and on to the next rectorship. I have faith in them as I have faith in you. Interim periods are great times to take stock and reorder priorities. It is my prayer that you all will seek a role to play in this process. I would expect an interim priest to be named early next year.

My last Sunday with you will be January 2nd which will make this an especially meaningful Christmastide together. After that time, my contact with you will be limited for a few years as a new rector will arrive who will have my encouragement and support, and – most importantly – space, to lead as he or she is called without my interference. Though you will not see much of me, please know that you will remain in my prayers. I will always have a place in my heart for this parish, and I will miss you. You have my blessing, my prayers, and my love.

I love you. You are a wonderful parish. You have treated my family well, and you have God's priorities in mind. You appreciate each other's gifts and take care of one another. I am deeply moved by the love you have shown and the hope that you possess despite difficulty and pandemic. You have bright days ahead, and I am thankful that I was able to walk with you for a time.

Yours in Christ,
Marc+